



A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEY

for gifted Year 5 and 6 children with
a love of performance and Harry Potter

'Disaster Threatens Hogwarts Australia'

G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organisation offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *JOURNEY* for both girls and boys will run over four sessions.

A serious lack of training centres for young Australian witches and wizards has prompted the internationally renowned Hogwarts School to open a new campus in the leafy outer suburbs of Melbourne. After the thrill of receiving your letter of offer by Owl Post, you arrive on the first day full of excitement about the magic that you'll learn and the friends that you'll make. But, at the end of your first week, the school is rocked by the discovery of a shocking prophecy. One of the new students (possibly you!) has been named as 'The Chosen One'. This witch or wizard will have a pivotal role to play in vanquishing the dark powers which threaten to destroy Hogwarts Australia, and all the staff and students who live there. In this interactive drama and creative writing 'on location' program, we will meet a new generation of wizarding world heroes and villains as we develop skills related to performance, theatrical storytelling and playmaking.

Day One AM: Alohamora

As you and your classmates arrive at Hogwarts, each of you will meet the Sorting Hat and be sorted into a Hogwarts house. After participating in a range of games to sharpen your creative and magical abilities, you will begin to create your student character, using the qualities of your Hogwarts House as a springboard. Will you be a brave Gryffindor, a wise Ravenclaw, a loyal Hufflepuff or a cunning Slytherin? Your character will be further developed through writing prompts and drama exercises before you meet up with other characters from your house to complete activities exploring status, motivation and relationships. Who is the leader of the group and who is the class clown? Who wants to ace their exams and who wants to become a dragon tamer? Who is your best friend and who is your mortal enemy? Together, we will learn about Stanislavski's method of defining a character's 'super objective' and we will discuss the importance of building contrasting characters when creating a narrative. Consider Luna Lovegood, Seamus Finnigan, the Weasley twins and Petunia Dursley; J.K.Rowling populated Harry's world with detailed and unique characters, and our Hogwarts Australia creations will be just as rich and diverse.

Day One PM: Lumos

With our student characters in place, we will begin to create scenes of daily life at Hogwarts Australia. We'll take Polyjuice Potion to transform into each other during Potions class, we'll see our spells go wrong in Charms and we'll transform objects in Transfiguration. Our magical expressive skills of movement and mime, facial expression and vocal variety will develop as our understanding of character deepens. As a group, we'll share our knowledge of villainous wizarding world characters – which characters or beings in the books made the biggest impact? Openly-nasty Malfoy? Traitorous Pettigrew? Power-hungry Umbridge? We'll discuss the different kinds of villains; their narrative function and the challenges of playing these roles. We'll look at the vital concept of conflict in drama and the interrelationship between character and plot. At the end of this session, a disturbing prophecy will reveal that all at Hogwarts Australia are in grave danger, and only the 'Chosen One' can save us from the dark forces which threaten to destroy us all.

Homework:

Begin to create a villainous 'dark' character, using the writing prompts provided.

Day Two AM: *Sectumsempra*

Today, we'll take our expressive skills further by developing our dark characters. This will require us to use exaggerated physical and vocal characterisation, and to speak in heightened language. We'll look at the theatrical style of *Magical Realism* – where the ordinary meets the fantastical - and by switching back and forth between our two characters, we'll explore both ends of this spectrum. We'll also discuss the importance of tension and timing in drama, as we work in pairs to create short scenes. Then, with all our character creations in place, our Chosen One/s will be revealed, and in two groups we'll begin to brainstorm and plot out two separate climactic conflicts between good and evil, working together to create scenes to tell our story. Perhaps our conflict will be between an escaped prisoner of Azkaban and a relative who was responsible for putting them there. Perhaps it will play out between a pure-blood fanatic Death Eater and a muggle-born activist. Or perhaps our villain will pose as a perfect student and attempt to expel and disgrace our 'chosen one' with false accusations. Ever wanted to create Wizarding World fan fiction? This is your golden opportunity!

Day Two PM: *Incendio*

In our final session, we will bring together all the skills we have developed, with each of our two groups improvising, scripting, rehearsing and performing a brand-new story about the conflict between a dark character and the Chosen One, taking place at Hogwarts Australia. We will explore dramatic structure, ensuring that our stories have all the elements needed to keep the audience on the edge of their seat. We will include theatrical storytelling techniques such as narration, use of placards and manipulation of timeline. We'll learn about some of the important off-stage roles during theatre rehearsals and look at simple stagecraft techniques, such as spatial relationship and sound effect that will bring the climax of our productions to new heights. Above all, we will discover the collaborative nature of theatre, as we work together to create and share stories that would make J.K. Rowling proud!

About the Presenter

Suzie Thomas has worked in the professional theatre world for over twenty years. She trained as an actor at the Atlantic Theatre School in New York and founded her own theatre company in Melbourne in 2001. After many years heading the Education and Families program at Melbourne Theatre Company, she is now a freelance theatre director and teaching artist and loves sharing the wonders of all things dramatic with young people.

Requirements: New Hogwarts Australia students are required to:

- Wear comfortable clothes that don't restrict your movement
- have read at least *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and to bring a writing book and a well-stocked pencil case (a magical pet owl, cat, toad or rat is optional...)
- Bring a snack for break time. No nuts please.

